

cations can be implemented for controlling the various functions of the system **100**. For example, the program engine **105** can execute within a server communicatively linked to a client via a browser. In another example, the program engine **105** can be a stand-alone application that synchronizes data with a remotely accessible data store.

[0038] Additionally, any operating system, which can support the execution of one or more applications intended to run on that platform and which support operation of the various functions and features disclosed herein, can be used in system **100**. For example, as the tools **120** can include one or more remote services, a portion of which have been implemented within a LINUX server, while other tools can be implemented within one or more UNIX servers and/or within a WINDOWS based platform.

[0039] The system **100** can also include one or more interface ports (not shown) used to physically connect devices and/or peripherals to the system **100**. For example, an interface port can be a standard wall jack to initiate telephone calls over the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). An interface port can also include a universal serial bus (USB) port, a firewire (IEEE 1394) port, a parallel port, a COM port like an RS-232 port, an ethernet port, an audio port, or the like.

[0040] Each of the various components of the system **100** disclosed herein can be communicatively linked with one another using appropriate circuitry, whether through one or more memories one or more additional interface processors or logic controllers, and/or the communications bus **135**. For example, while each of the elements described herein is depicted as being linked to the communications bus **135**, it should be appreciated that each element can be configured to communicate with a processor through a suitable interface, such as a digital input and/or output or through an intermediate interface processor, for example using an interrupt request of the processor.

[0041] Additionally, one skilled in the art will recognize that the various components disclosed herein can be embodied in various other forms and that the configuration disclosed and described with reference to **FIG. 1** is provided for purposes of illustration only. For example, the various components can be implemented as one or more discrete components, as one or more processors, logic controllers, and/or DSP's, or any combination thereof.

[0042] **FIG. 2** is an graphical user interface (GUI) **200** for one embodiment of an interactive wellness application in accordance with the inventive arrangements disclosed herein. The GUI **200** illustrates a program navigator that tracks progress of a participant throughout various stages of a personalized wellness program. The GUI **200** can include a digital coach **220**, a coach dialogue **205**, a progress tree **210**, participant specific encouragements **215**, a progress bar **217**, interaction buttons **225**, GUI options **230**, and the like.

[0043] The digital coach **220** can be a personal guide and confidant for a participant. Information told to the digital coach **220** can be encrypted and secured, thereby remaining confidential between the participant and the automated system. The digital coach **220** can be represented by a static or an animated image. Further, the digital coach **220** can have a unique grammar and speech tonal characteristics. For instance, each digital coach **220** can be associated with a concatenative text-to-speech voice and a customized speech recognition grammar.

[0044] A digital coach **220** can have a simulated personality designed to engage the participant. As such, a participant can select a digital coach **220** from a set of available coaches to match the participant's needs, desires, and/or personality. As a participant interacts with the digital coach **220** the digital coach **220** can be dynamically adjusted using learning algorithms and participant feedback.

[0045] Any of a variety of simulated representations can be used for a digital coach **220**. For example, a digital coach **220** can be a designated age, can speak a configurable language, can be a set gender, and the like. In one embodiment tailored towards children, fictitious characters, such as cartoons, animals, trucks, and the like can be digital coaches **220**. In another embodiment, a digital coach **220** can be a simulation of a particular person, such as an actor, a politician, a historical figure, a relative, and the like. A digital coach **220** can have a gambit of simulated personalities from aggressive to shy, taciturn to expressive, warm to cold, gentle to tough, etc.

[0046] The coach dialogue **205** can visually and/or audibly present comments from the digital coach **220** to the participant. The comments can be specifically configured toward the participant, current events, and the personality of the digital coach **220**.

[0047] The progress tree **210** can visually illustrate the participant's progress within the program. In one embodiment, the progress tree **210** can be constructed of interactively expandable nodes, each node expansion detailing program specifics relating to the participant. The progress tree **210** can present milestones that must be achieved for a given stage, list tasks designed to help the participant overcome hurdles to reaching the milestone, and other stage relevant data.

[0048] The encouragements **215** can appear randomly within the GUI **200** to motivate the participant. Encouragements **215** can be customized for the participant to help overcome identified physical and mental hurdles and to provide re-enforcement of desired behavior and/or mental states.

[0049] The progress bar **217** can graphically show progress that a participant has made within the program. Unlike traditional wellness programs that focus upon weight, the progress indicated in the progress bar **217** can be weight independent, representing a customized progress score for the participant, thereby permitting a participant to progress without being overly fixated on intermittent weight changes. The progress score can be based upon a multitude of factors, such as eating habits, psychological progress, nutritional knowledge, body fat composition, exercise progress, cholesterol level, and any other participant metric. Different weights can be applied to different factors. Further, different participants can have differentially weighted factors for purposes of computing the progress score.

[0050] Clicking on the progress bar **217** can activate a window showing dates and milestones achieved in the program, each having a brief explanation. Presentation of the participant's progress can be used to re-invigorate the participant so that further progress can be made and so that the participant does not become apathetic. Showing progress details can be especially important to encourage participants who are making progress in the program, when such par-